

The Brooklyn Paper

Including Carroll Gardens-Cobble Hill Paper, Downtown News, DUMBO Paper and Fort Greene-Clinton Hill Paper



Brooklyn's REAL newspapers

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RATNER'S MONEY PIT



Mermaids on parade

Bunny Love (right) hangs with Venus the Fiji Mermaid during the annual costume parade in Coney Island on Sunday. See story on page 5.

Study: Arena would cost city \$1/2-billion

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

An economic analysis released yesterday by developer Bruce Ratner's Atlantic Yards arena and high-rise plan as a money loser that would cost the state and city more than half-a-billion dollars.

"Make no mistake, this project from Forest City Ratner will be using taxpayer money, and looks like it will be just Peebles, of Fort Greene, a Manhattan University researcher who co-authored the report with Jung Kim, an urban planner.

Peebles said he felt compelled to undertake the study after a sports economist he consulted, Peebles by name, claimed the \$2.5-billion Atlantic Yards project would put \$800 million into city and state coffers.

The Peebles and Kim report concluded the project will come at a net loss to taxpayers — to the tune of \$506 million.

An anthropologist who studies economic history and is a mem-



Yards project on our delicate city and state finances," he wrote.

In addition to their independent analysis, Peebles said that he and Kim consulted independent think tanks, professors and non-profits for their study.

Ratner purchased the New Jersey Nets this year and, pending approval of the NBA, plans to move them to Brooklyn. He has maintained that the project would use almost no public money because it would be funded largely by the tax revenue it would generate.

But even Zimbalist, in his analysis, estimated that Atlantic Yards would cost taxpayers at \$449 million. Pressed by a councilwoman at a public hearing the previous day, Ratner refused to release in May, Forest City Ratner Vice President James Stuckey acknowledged that the public's price tag for Atlantic Yards would be in the hundreds of millions.

A Forest City Ratner spokesman declined to comment for this article.

In addition to the Frank Gehry See RATNER on page 4

RE-GURGITATORS

Familiar faces at Nathan's dog eating contest

By Krista Larson
Associated Press

Bill "El Wingard" Simmons traces his competitive eating abilities way back: "As soon as I could walk I ran to the dinner table before my sister got there."

Now the four-time Philadelphia "Wing Bowl" champion can add another competitive eating title to his resume: New Jersey Turnpike hot dog king.

Simmons, 42, of Woodbury Heights, devoured 16 hot dogs in 12 minutes Friday, besting 13 other contestants in a qualifying contest for the Nathan's Famous Fourth of July hot-dog-eating contest in Coney Island.

His strategy? Eating the meat two dogs at a time, followed by buns dipped in his drinking water. Not bad for only his second hot dog-eat-off.

"I just have to go home and digest this food, and then dip in my pool and I'll be all right," he said after his victory over 16-year-old Nathan's.

Welcome to the world of competitive eating — complete with its own rules and global governing body, the International Federation of Competitive Eating. The IFOCE will sanction more than 70 competitions this year — everything



America's hope of regaining the hot dog title may rest on the tiny shoulders of 100-pound Sonya Thomas, seen here at last year's contest.

See HOT DOGS on page 5

Clones' winning week

By Vince DiMiceli
Brooklyn Papers Sports Editor

The first full week of the Brooklyn Cyclones' 2004 campaign was a successful one, as the team pushed their record to 8-6, good for second place in the McNamara Division.

You can read all about the Brooks past week in our expanded Brooklyn Cyclones section on page 5.

This holiday weekend, the Clones will take on the New York-Penn League champion Williamsport Crosscutters in a two-game set at KeySpan Park. Saturday's game begins at 6 pm. Sunday will feature an Independence Day matinee, with a rare noon start.

Next Sunday will be Brooklyn Papers Day at KeySpan, with papers columnist Ed Shakespeare throwing out the ceremonial first pitch.

Fireworks shut Heights

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

Police are expecting Brooklyn Heights and Fulton Ferry Landing to be packed with spectators angling for a spectacular view of Sunday's Fourth of July fireworks extravaganza.

And to meet those expectations they will close several major neighborhood arteries to both traffic and parking.

Remaining above the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway along the East River, between Remsen and Orange streets, the promenade should offer the best view of the Macy's sponsored pyrotechnics, with Fulton

Landing running a close second.

Police are warning anyone planning to travel to Brooklyn Heights to be patient, as there is parking in the neighborhood — which is normally a tough go — on July 4, near impossible as several streets are closed to vehicles. Even residents will have to move their cars from some streets, which will have flers posted, or face relocation by tow truck, police said.

The streets closed to traffic between the hours of roughly 6 pm and some time after crowds have dispersed will be:

— Montague, Remsen and Pierrepont between Court Street and the promenade.

— Furman and Hicks Streets between Atlantic Avenue and Old Fulton Street.

— Columbia Heights, Montague Terrace and Pierrepont Terrace, between Remsen and Old Fulton streets.

Henry Street between Atlantic Avenue and Cadman Plaza West.

For a year, Macy's department store, which sponsors the fireworks, is expanding the extravaganza with six barges in three locations. Three barges will be on the East River between Manhattan and Queens, just south of Roosevelt Island; two will be just south of the Brooklyn Bridge, and a new one will launch dazzling fireworks shells just off Ellis Island, near the Statue of Liberty.

The pyrotechnics spectacular will kick off at about 9:20 pm and last about half an hour.

Fire Department boats will start the show at 7:30 pm with soaring arcs of red, white and blue water. The Air Force will shoot millions of feathers over the FDR Drive as it goes up the river with a fly-over, breaking the sound barrier over the drive.

Besides the promenade, prime viewing spots include the Louis Valentino Pier at the end of Coffey Street in Red Hook, Empire-Fulton Ferry and Brooklyn Bridge Park, and Old Fulton Ferry Landing at the end of Old Fulton Street on the East River. Not to mention rooftops, as the fireworks will be viewable to anyone with an unobstructed view of the East River or harbor.

No viewing will be allowed from the Manhattan, Brooklyn or Williamsburg bridges.

In addition, the FDR Drive will be closed for spectator viewing from 7 pm to 10 pm, from 14th to 42nd streets. Pedestrian access to the FDR Drive for viewing will be at 23rd, 38th and 42nd streets only. In downtown Manhattan, the FDR Drive will be closed for spectator viewing at the tent line, across the Pearl Street exit ramp. Entrances will be granted from the Pearl Street ramp only. The FDR Drive will be closed to vehicular traffic from Houston Street to 63rd Street.

The largest fireworks display in the country includes 36,000 shells set off from the six barges mentioned above, 300 to 500 feet.

To get to the promenade by train, take the A, C or F to Jay Street/Borough Hall, the 2/3 to Clark Street, or the 4 or R to Court Street/Borough Hall and walk down Montague Street to the promenade.

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Woman groped, robbed on Joralemon Street

POLICE

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

A woman was out walking her dog on Joralemon Street at 8 am Friday when she suddenly felt a man hugging her from behind.

"I thought she was my boyfriend, but when she turned around she discovered it was a total stranger."

"Get off me," the 34-year-old woman yelled as she pushed the stranger away.

The manhandling marauder started apologizing, but continued asking her questions about where she lived, her dog's name, and so on.

The woman told police the stranger had molested her. To make matters worse, she soon realized that she was missing a silver bracelet & Co. bracelet with a heart pendant.

The incident occurred on June 25 between Henry and Clinton streets.

Garfield mug

A woman walking along Garfield Place between Sixth Avenue at 4 pm on June 28 was stopped by a pair of thugs who pushed her to the ground and tried to take her cell phone.

The victim, 45, put up a fight but one of the men was able to wrest free her handbag.

The two men fled down Garfield Place towards Seventh Avenue.

When she returned two hours later, at 4 pm, on June 24, the wallet, which the thief told police was \$100, a driver's license and credit cards, was gone.

Crack' attack

Some scum try to scare Yankees

But one boyfriend took another approach this week.

"You're a crack-head,"

told his girlfriend before slugging her in the face and taking the pay phone receiver she was holding.

The victim, 25, of Fifth Avenue and Ninth Street at 2 pm on June 22.

The boyfriend tipped his sweet target by picking up his bicycle and hurling it at his main squeeze, causing cuts and bruises to her legs.

Police arrested the 42-year-old Park Slope man at 800 577-TIPS.

Court breakdown

An elderly, physically disabled man who, according to police, had not taken his medication lashed out at passersby on Court Street and then threatened a police officer with a sharp shard of metal.

The melter broke out just before 11 am when the suspect approached a man standing outside a Court Street shop.

"Who are you looking at?" he asked before grabbing the victim's eyeglasses and hat.

The police caught up with the man when the suspect approached a man standing outside a Court Street shop.

"Who are you looking at?" he asked before grabbing the victim's eyeglasses and hat.

The melter lashed out again at 11:30 pm on June 25 and found the front door unlocked. He then opened... Both had been closed when he left the apartment at 1:30 pm.

The thief then opened an oven door and pocketed a \$400 watch and a \$10,000 worth of jewelry snatched from the victim's family home.

Police arrested the 51-year-old man at Red Hook just after 7 pm on June 24.

Posing as customers, the men called out with money in their hands and pointed them into their midst. But once he approached, they lashed out, punching the 51-year-old man in the face and cutting his lip.

The 23-year-old resident re-



Pin one on me

Seven-month-old Michael Schwartz joins his father, Sgt. John Schwartz, at the 76th Precinct's Medal Day, June 19, in St. Stephen's Church on Summit Street in Carroll Gardens.

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NOT JUST NETS • THE NEW BROOKLYN • NOT JUST NETS

Downtown plan gets green light

By Deborah Kolben

The Brooklyn Papers

A major rezoning plan that city and borough officials hope will turn Downtown Brooklyn into a booming metropolis of skyscrapers and corporate back-office space was approved this week in a nearly unanimous vote in the City Council.

"This plan will help us keep jobs," said Councilman David Yassky at Monday's vote. "It's good for New York City and it's good for Brooklyn."

The plan passed by a vote of 47-0, with one abstention.

On Thursday, the man whose signature the rezoning and urban renewal initiative awaits, Mayor Michael Bloomberg, lauded the Downtown Brooklyn Plan as a "key part of this administration's strategy to preserve and grow jobs." Bloomberg made the comments at a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Bank of New York's new office space at the new Atlantic Terminal.

The office tower at Atlantic and Flatbush avenues, which is part of a shopping mall and transportation hub built by developer Bruce Ratner and the MTA, will house 1,400 Bank of New York employees.

"We want to have jobs you have to make the city more livable and more economically diverse," said Bloomberg.

Having Bank of New York, whose Lower Manhattan offices suffered heavy damage on 9-11, as an anchor tenant allowed Ratner to

apply for and receive Liberty Bonds to finance half of the construction cost of Atlantic Terminal.

The Downtown Brooklyn Plan would allow for the construction of 4.5 million square feet of office space, 1 million square feet of retail, 1,400 units of housing and 2,500 parking spaces.

As part of that plan, the city hopes to attract corporate interest in building three new office towers with as much as 3 million square feet of space each. A 15-acre park on Willoughby Street just west of Flatbush Avenue Extension.

Also planned is another office tower at Borough Place; the construction of new office and residential space on the eastern side of Flatbush Avenue Extension, between Myrtle Avenue, east of Flatbush Avenue Extension; and about 2,000 parking spots.

As part of the plan the city intends to condemn seven acres of private property, including 130 residential units and 100 businesses in the downtown area.

But Andrew Alper, president of the city Economic Development Corporation, co-sponsor of the plan with the city's Department of Planning, said this week that no condemnation or construction would begin until the city identified developers and tenants for the sites.

"What we want to do is make sure we have tenants first, so we will be out talking to businesses around the country and around the

world and make sure we have something to build before we start taking land and doing other actions like that," Alper said at Thursday's Atlantic Terminal press conference.

The initial phase of the \$100 million plan aims at reviving Flatbush Avenue into a gateway to Brooklyn, said City Planning Director Amanda Burden. If all goes well, she said, the reconstruction of Flatbush Avenue Extension could begin in a year.

While resurrecting a center median with trees on both sides — it will be a connector and not a divider — and give a signal that Downtown Brooklyn is really reborn," Burden said Thursday.

Before the plan goes forward, the council's landmarks subcommittee will again hold a public hearing on the potential connection between homes along Duffield Street — one of the primary development sites in the plan — to the Underground Railroad.

When considering that street might have once been used to house fugitive slaves, the city commissioned a study to determine the historical significance of the property, but claimed to have found no such evidence.

That research was partly based on consultations with more than a dozen agencies including the highly respected Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

But when Christopher Moore,

exhibitions research coordinator for the Schomburg Center, testified last



From left, Councilwoman Letitia James, Borough President Marty Markowitz, Bank of New York CEO Tom Reny, Mayor Michael Bloomberg and City Planning Director Amanda Burden cut ribbon at new Bank of New York offices at Atlantic Terminal, near the intersection of Flatbush and Atlantic avenues.

month that nobody from the city had ever contacted his organization regarding Duffield Street, council members decided to schedule the additional hearing.

Conducted by the Brooklyn Papers two weeks ago, representatives of the Weeksville Society, a non-profit organization dedicated to pre-

serving remains of the free African-American community, and Bridge Street AME Church, the first black congregation in Brooklyn — and a known stop on the Underground Railroad — said that despite being named in the study nobody had actually contacted them.

East New York Councilman

Charles Barron, who accused the Bloomberg administration of "blatantly lying" about the Duffield Street research, abstained from this week's vote.

Asked by the Papers why he did not cast a vote against the plan, Barron said, "The only reason I abstained is because they are pro-

missing and will have the hearing."

Ever since the city first announced the rezoning earlier this year, residents have been working to ensure their neighborhoods will be protected and not overrun with traffic.

Residents and business owners packed the four public hearings on the plan. The Institute of Design and Construction, a 67-year-old architectural school at the corner of Flatbush Avenue Extension and Willoughby Street that was to be razed to make way for residential buildings from Flatbush Avenue to the planned Willoughby Square, was spared after much wrangling.

For Greenpoint and Prospect Heights Councilwoman Letitia James, who initially opposed the plan, the rezoning reflects the mayor's commitment to affordable housing, traffic mitigation and "the recognition of historical resource and the commitment to some additional historic resources."

James voted to support the plan after negotiations with the mayor or to fund a study of residential permit parking in the area and to cut back on the number of parking spaces reserved for official government use.

Yassky, Bloomberg and Transportation Commissioner Iris Weinshall held a photo opportunity at the corner of Smith and State streets Thursday morning to announce that more than 110 spaces allocated for city agency vehicles would be eliminated in Downtown Brooklyn by the fall.



Lou Sones leads car caravan along Van Dyke Street Sunday to protest the planned Red Hook Ikea.

Red Hook wants 'contract' from Ikea

By Jotham Sederstrom

The Brooklyn Papers

A public hearing Wednesday on Ikea's plan to build a suburban-style store on the Red Hook waterfront highlighted for the umpteenth time the bitter rift that has emerged between neighborhood residents seeking jobs and those who see the community's decline in thousands of stores and trucks the Swedish furniture giant would bring to their streets.

But aside from all the usual bluster, at the June 30 hearing at Borough Hall, came a call for the home furnishings giant to put its promises to the test.

Several dozen people, mostly from the 90 people who testified before former Borough President Marty Markowitz voiced doubt that Ikea officials would make good on their promises of jobs and traffic rene-

diation without a legally binding agreement, commonly known as a community benefits agreement.

"That's the question. If you have to accept it, then you have to negotiate an agreement," said traffic consultant Kelli Ketcham, executive director of Community Consulting Services.

Despite verbal and written commitments by Ikea following Community Board 6's vote to approve the site's zoning, the company has yet to sign a legally binding Board Chairman Jerry Arner said that a list of recommendations he helped draft were not guaranteed unless City Council members agreed to adopt them as conditions of their approval of the Ikea application when it comes before the fall.

Another condition of the rezoning that would bar Ikea from opening until all traffic mitigation measures are put in place. The company has also agreed to finance traffic studies after

the store opens and to pay for any subsequent improvements determined to be needed.

The Swedish home furnishings giant hopes to construct a 346,000-square-foot store at the former New York Shipyard site between Dwight and Columbia streets along the Erie Basin.

The plans also include 1,400 parking spaces and more than 70,000 square feet of additional retail and restaurants.

While opponents of the plan say the store will drive up 50,000 cars a week to the neighborhood, Ikea officials maintain that on the store's busiest days, Saturday and Sunday, they expect 5,000 cars each day.

Ikea officials have shied away from giving specific numbers of jobs to Red Hook, or to residents living in the 11231 ZIP code that encompasses the neighborhood. Instead they have promised to provide job training and to

accept applications from residents living in that ZIP code two weeks before the hiring process is opened to the general public.

"It's rather astonishing that Brooklyn's leaders have not mounted any of the challenges that Ikea routinely faces, if it doesn't defeat Ikea, it at least earns them more tangible benefits than CB6 has," Ketcham said in his testimony before the borough president.

"These small communities negotiate lucrative community benefits agreements. We give Brooklyn away for free."

Brad Lander, director of the Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development, believes that through a community benefits agreement between Red Hook and Ikea is still within the realm of possibility. The former executive director of the Fifth Avenue Committee, a tenants rights group, did not attend the hearing

on Wednesday but told The Brooklyn Papers that if a large enough faction from the opposing groups came together, they could force a legally binding agreement from Ikea.

Lander said he has discussed the idea with Rep. Nydia Velazquez, whose district includes Red Hook, and that she was intrigued. Velazquez could not be reached for comment by press time.

Red Hook Councilwoman Sara Gonzalez has not taken a stance on such an agreement. But she has already stated her support for Ikea's plan. No one from the councilwoman's office attended the hearing on Wednesday.

Pat Smith, a spokesman for Ikea, said that the company has already responded to the community's recommendations. He said a community benefits agreement was not feasible, citing the polarization in the neighborhood.

Watchtower tower gains momentum

Some residents back off opposition to plan for huge DUMBO lot

By Deborah Kolben

The Brooklyn Papers

Residents who moved into a newly converted, six-story condominium at Bridge and Front streets less than two years ago, say they had no idea what was in store for a massive, three-acre site across the street.

But after purchasing their apartments, residents soon found out the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, the corporate entity of the Jehovah's Witnesses religious order, had plans to build four soaring residential towers for 1,500 units that meet the site's lot, which sits at the border of DUMBO and Vinegar Hill.

Those same Bridge Street residents came out in force this week, asking Community Board 2 to disapprove the rezoning of the site to allow the high-rise construction. The public hearing Wednesday night was held by the board's land use committee at Congregation Mikveh Israel, in Brooklyn Heights as the final step in the city's public review of the proposal.

"This will dwarf the surrounding areas," said Bridge Street resident Christy Nyberg at the hearing. She presented a petition against the project with 10 signatures.

But what those Bridge Street neighbors didn't expect was that an ally in opposing the plan, the DUMBO Neighborhood Association (DNA), would change its position on the Watchtower project.

"It's not a reversal — it's

refinement," said DNA President Nancy Webster on Thursday.

"We've never been opposed to a residential use at 85 Jay St., we've simply commented on what they're proposing to build," Webster added.

But at the DNA's annual meeting, the development association dismissed the plan decrying the towers as "too high" and out of scale with the rest of the neighborhood. She also criticized the plan for not including retail space.

"Because there is no street-level retail, there is no facility for public interaction on the main pedestrian corridor coming out of DUMBO's only subway station," Webster said, referring to Jay Street stop on the F Line.

And in a letter to City Planning Director Amanda Burden, Webster wrote of the Watchtower plan, "Towers of such height will serve to wall off and dominate two lower-income neighborhoods, rather than providing a complementary step down from one to the other."

In a deal brokered with the aid of Community Board 2, DNA has agreed to throw its support behind the project, or at least not protest it, providing the religious organization agrees to renovate the York Street subway station, which Webster said is in poor condition.

"We are disappointed they decided to immediately plunge into bargaining when it should have been a last-ditch effort," said Evelyn Campbell, president of the 79 Bridge St. condo board.

She said that, as a result, the DNA steering committee, which tests and develops the Watchtower plan, has agreed to provide a complementary step down from one to the other.

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Bravest celebrates 100th birthday in Ridge



The Brooklyn Papers / J. J. O'Leary

Retired firefighter Walter Mulvihill, who celebrated his 100th birthday on May 30, wearing the Fire Department jacket and cap given to him by firefighters to mark the milestone.

By Jotham Sederstrom
The Brooklyn Papers

The only fire Walter Mulvihill had to extinguish on May 30 was the one that burned from the single candle on his birthday cake. It was a considerable mission nonetheless: the retired firefighter had just turned 100 years old.

Mulvihill celebrated the milestone with more than 100 people, including family, at the St. Nicholas Home for the Aged at 425 Ovington Ave. in Bay Ridge. Still bounding with energy, one of New York's bravest, and oldest, had no trouble blowing out his candle.

Along with his 87-year-old brother, Leo, and a nephew, Lee, Mulvihill was greeted by local clergy from Our Lady of Angels church, on Fourth Avenue at 73rd Street, where the senior saint still worships.

A graduate of Our Lady of Perpetual Help parochial school, Mulvihill spent most mornings as a child volunteering as an altar boy.

"He's always been, in my mind, the consummate gentleman," said Joseph Atalla, Mulvihill's attendant at the home since 1995. "He takes a walk around the block almost every day."

Between 12 and 15 members of the Fire Department stopped by as well, and gave him a

new FDNY coat as a gift. "I told them I'd wear it every day," said Mulvihill. "I'm proud of it."

Not to be outdone, members of state Sen. Marty Golden's staff presented him with a state proclamation.

"It gives me great pleasure to honor and commend the life of Walter Mulvihill as he celebrates his 100th birthday at the St. Nicholas Home for the Aged, and it should be noted that it was 10 years ago when our organization and elected officials at the St. Nicholas for his 90th birthday," reads the proclamation from Golden.

Mulvihill was a firefighter in Brooklyn between 1931 and 1951, an era in which several of the borough's largest blazes were sparked. One,

he recalled, included a trash fire in Coney Island in 1932 that grew to include most of the boardwalk and the bathhouse. It drew firefighters from three boroughs.

Mulvihill retired from the Fire Department in 1951 and took work as a messenger for a business on Wall Street. From there he worked at the New York Insurance company before retiring in the 1970s.

Mulvihill isn't the only one in his family to live long lives. His mother, said Atalla, lived to the age of 101. She died in 1974.

"We see more and more people coming to that milestone," said Golden this week. "He's a unique individual and a true hero."

Hey Bruce! They'll drive to the arena, too

To the editor:

You reported that Bruce Bender, executive vice president of Forest City Ratner Companies, said that he expects most shoppers at the soon-to-open Atlantic Terminal shopping mall will drive rather than take mass transit ("Traffic Nightmare," page 1, June 19) even though it will be light out and the subways and buses will be running frequently.

Is this the same Bruce Bender who expects most attendees at the Nets games and other arena events will arrive and depart these games and events by public transportation at night, when buses and subways run infrequently and

LETTERS

people will need to walk home, in the dark, from their subway stops and bus stops. There is something wrong with this picture.

— Robert W. Orlingher,
Prospect Heights

To the editor:

I would like to counter [EDC Chief Operating Officer] Joshua Green's letter to the editor in last week's edition, "EDC courting 'Downtown Plan' le."

The honest truth is the EDC did not bother to contact the Shoenberg Library. If they did, why was Chris Moore so angry when they used his

name as someone they made contact with during the City Council Land Use subcommittee hearing?

The truth is Mr. Sirefman and his associates in the City Planning Commission and the Downtown Brooklyn Council were caught with their pants down when Councilman [Charles] Barron questioned them during the hearing.

The Downtown Brooklyn Plan never received community input from the surrounding communities. In fact, if the Downtown Brooklyn Plan was satisfactory the Brooklyn Heights Association would not have testified against it. However, the City Planning Commission [led by] Amanda Burden

ignored the various communities' opposition to the Downtown Brooklyn Plan, among them the aforementioned, the Brooklyn Hill Association and the Brooklyn Coalition Against Urban Removal.

Mr. Sirefman should not gloat about how he was pleased the City Council Land Use committee voted in favor of the plan. He knows the vote was

delayed because the subcommittee was going to vote the plan down, however, Deputy Mayor Daniel Doctoroff, in a kind of plan to make structural improvements on the streets of Downtown Brooklyn. However, the surrounding residents will, of course, suffer when the roads are torn up again.

If traffic gets so great, stand on Flatbush Avenue on a Thursday or Friday afternoon. Mr. Sirefman is a fine role model for children that if the le is big enough, then model it will believe it. — Daniel McCalla,

Fort Greene

Brooklyn, even disrepect to fellow city workers. The Downtown Brooklyn Environmental Impact Statement has no kind of plan to make structural improvements on the streets of Downtown Brooklyn. However, the surrounding residents will, of course, suffer when the roads are torn up again.

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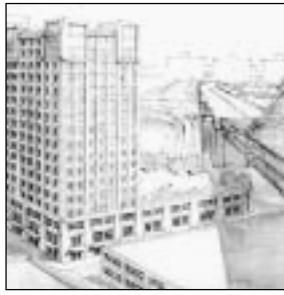
Editor's Note: Mr. McCalla has declared his intention to run for the 57th District Assembly seat recently vacated by Roger Green.

Send us a letter

By mail: Letters Editor, Brooklyn Papers, 55 Washington St., Suite 624, Brooklyn, NY 11201
Fax: (718) 834-2727

By e-mail: Newsroom@BrooklynPapers.com
Letters must be signed and include the writer's home address and phone (only the writer's neighborhood and street name are published with the letter). Letters may be edited and will not be returned.

Marty: 'No' to Walentas' bridge block



David Walentas' proposed tower for 37 Water St. in DUMBO. The Brooklyn Bridge is at right.

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

If there's one thing Borough President Marty Markowitz loves as much as Brooklyn, it's the Brooklyn Bridge.

And while he's not shy about proclaiming his support for major development projects, this week Markowitz recommended the city disapprove a proposal to build a 178-foot-tall residential building in DUMBO because it would block views of the historic span.

"The Brooklyn Bridge defines the elegance, grace and boldness of our borough. It is the symbol of Brooklyn that I hold in highest esteem," As borough president I consider it my duty to be the caretaker of the most recognizable symbol of all of Brooklyn, and to preserve its magnificent views."

Real estate developer David Walentas, whose Two Trees Management company has converted many of DUMBO's industrial warehouses into apartment and office buildings, proposes to build a 38-story residential building that would rise at 38 Water St. — currently a two-story building that is home to the St. Ann's Warehouse performance spaces.

But when local community groups got wind of Walentas' latest project, they banded together in opposition.

The Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn Heights and DUMBO Neighborhood associations all called on the developer to scale back the project.

The plan also includes a three-story, 327-space public parking garage with its entrance on Front Street, 8,000 square feet of retail space along Water Street and an 8,000-square-foot performance space that would be rented to a non-profit arts group.

Community Board 2 voted against the development in May, citing the blocked bridge views. They also passed a resolution calling for future building proposals for the site lower than the Brooklyn Bridge roadway and be consistent with adjacent buildings.

Walentas certified his plans with the Department of City Planning in March, starting the clock on the approximately seven-month city Unified Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP). That means public review before a committee of the borough president, City Planning Commission and City Council.

"We're happy that the borough president agrees with us that Brooklyn Bridge views should be saved," said Nancy Webster, president of the DUMBO Neighborhood Association, after Markowitz issued his negative recommendation on Thursday.

Upon hearing of the borough president's recommendation, Jed Walentas, who says his father owns Two Trees, said simply, "I'm very disappointed."

Along with his recommendation to disapprove the plan, Markowitz issued a statement explaining that he was optimistic Two Trees would find a way to build at 38 Water St. and cap the height at 80 feet.

"If he's saying that, then he's saying he wants nothing built there," Jed said. "Nobody can build a building at that site that's economically feasible under 80 feet."

"It's unfortunate that he should cave to this sort of political pressure since the building has no impact on the Brooklyn Bridge," Walentas added.

The plan now goes before the City Planning Commission, which has 60 days to host a public hearing and issue a recommendation before it moves on to the council.

2 massive Urban Renewal projects would change the face of Downtown Brooklyn forever —

turning both quaint and gritty neighborhoods into high-trafficked walled communities, and massively impacting life in the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

The proposed Nets arena is just a small part of the master plan, the most expensive Urban Renewal and property condemnation in Brooklyn's history.

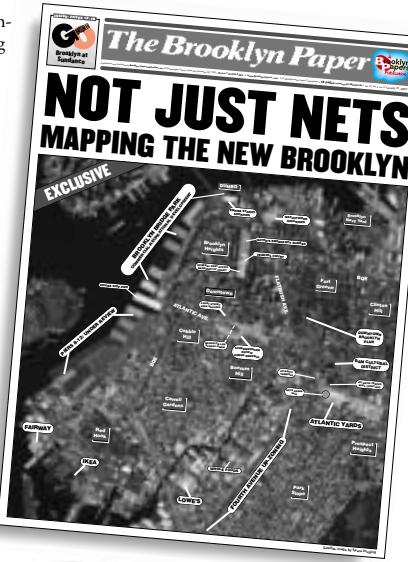
Only The Brooklyn Papers has asked: Is this the Manhattanization of Brooklyn ... or the "depeopling" suburbanization of our streets?

Are these projects good for Brooklyn?

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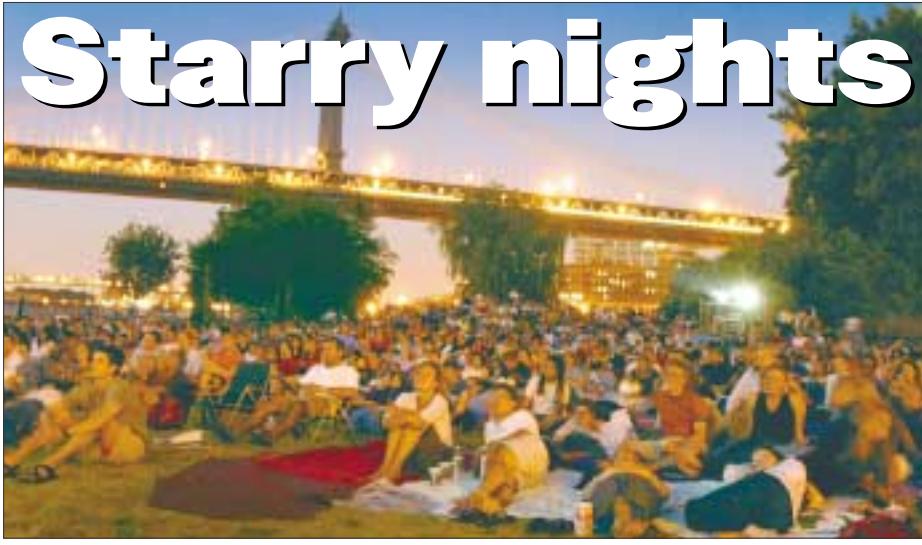
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The Brooklyn Papers' essential guide to the Borough of Kings

July 3, 2004



Starry nights

By Paulanne Simmons
for The Brooklyn Papers

The Brooklyn Bridge Park Summer Film Festival, celebrating its fifth season, will once again present stars under the stars for six Thursdays at Empire-Fulton Ferry State Park.

This year's films will be "a little bit of a mix" with movies that take place in Brooklyn ("Arsenic and Old Lace," "Dog Day Afternoon," "Radio Days," Spike Lee's "25th Hour") and movies starring Brooklyn actors (Edie Falco, the voice of Donkey in "Shrek" and Richard Dreyfuss, as Matt Hooper in "Jaws"), said Sharon Soons, a spokeswoman for the series' host, the Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy.

Each evening will also include a short produced or directed by a Brooklynite. One filmmaker who answered BBPC's call for entries is Brooklyn Heights resident Marvin

Starkman, who produced "The Box" (1961), a comic tale of technology gone wrong, shot by cameraman John Cazale, who later played Sal in "Dog Day Afternoon."

Starkman, who met Cazale while they were both students at Boston University and GO together, "Cazale was a multi-talented and incredible. Photography was one of his many skills. I asked him to shoot my film as a favor." In addition to "Dog Day," Cazale also co-

starred in "The Godfather" Parts I and II. He died shortly after filming "The Deer Hunter."

"The Box" stars Michael Lombard ("Prizzi's Honor," "Thomas Crown Affair") has been sold to television that won't work the way he wants it to. The

film was made on a shoestring budget with "short ends," leftover unexposed pieces from larger reels.

Starkman, who is an actor/director with the Abington Theater Company, has directed two shows at The Brooklyn Heights Synagogue — "The Tentmaker," in 1996, and "Incident at Vicki's," in 2003.

The Summer Film Festival kicks off on July 8 with "Radio Days" (1987), a nostalgic

over a movie theater, and that was where the fuse box was located. The movie theater closed at night. So when we blew a fuse in the afternoon, we knew we had better not blow another fuse after midnight, or we couldn't shoot the film."

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CINEMA

Brooklyn Bridge Park Summer Film Festival screens films on Thursdays from July 8 through Aug. 12 at Empire-Fulton Ferry State Park, between the Brooklyn and Manhattan bridges in DUMBO. Enter at Water Street and Main Street. Admission is \$10 per person and are free of charge. Rain dates are the following Fridays. For more information, visit www.bbpc.net or call (718) 802-0603.



Free for all: (Top) Brooklynites enjoy free films on the grass in DUMBO. (Above left) Actor Michael Lombard in a scene from "The Box," screening July 8. (Above right) "Dog Day Afternoon," starring Al Pacino, will be shown July 22.



Photo: AP

DUMBO outdoor film fest offers bike valet, food and more

By Paulanne Simmons
for The Brooklyn Papers

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BOOKS

Guns & dames

America Books has just released an anthology of new short fiction set in various Brooklyn neighborhoods. "Brooklyn Noir" is a collection of gloomy, gritty tales about the frailty of the human condition. Each of the 20 stories also stars a different Brooklyn neighborhood, from Greenpoint to Coney Island, from East New York to Bed-Stuy.

Brooklyn Heights author-editor Tim McLaughlin and authors C.J. Sullivan and Lou Manfredo will read from their tales next week at the Barnes & Noble on Franklin Street in Downtown Brooklyn on July 8 at 7 pm.

McLaughlin's story,

"When All This Was Bay Ridge," is about a man in a Sunset Park bar who's come home to recently deceased father's secret life. Manfredo's "Case Closed" follows a detective in Bensonhurst's 62nd Precinct as he struggles to apprehend a suspect who menaced the dame with mesmerizing blue eyes; and Sullivan's "Slipping into Darkness" sheds light on a terrifying night in Bushwick.

The Barnes & Noble where the reading will take place is at 106 Court St. at State Street. For more information, call (718) 246-4976.

—Lisa J. Curtis

MUSIC

'It's So Easy'

Sovieties pop icon Linda Ronstadt and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra will perform the singer's rock hits along with great American standards arranged by Nelson Riddle on July 8 at 7:30 pm at Asser Levy Park in Coney Island.

Rock concert kicks off the 26th Annual Seaside Summer Concert Series in Coney Island. Expect a memorable evening as the Grammy Award-winner performs the hits from her 30-plus albums, which have sold more than 50 million copies.

The Seaside concerts continue on Thursdays

through Aug. 19 at Asser Levy Park, West Fifth Street and Surf Avenue. The concerts are free.

Bring your own chair or lawn chair onsite for \$5 (\$10 for July 3 and July 12). For concert hotline updates, call (718) 469-1912 or log on to the Web site at www.brooklynconcerts.com.

—Lisa J. Curtis

ART

Pot of gold

Put on your sunglasses and go to Empire-Fulton Ferry State Park to see the Brooklyn Waterfront Artists Coalition's latest outdoor sculpture exhibition, "Chasing Rainbows."

Although pots of gold are rare, imaginative works won't be in short supply. Among the wide array of artwork on display is Tyrone Tripoli's "The Selfish Genie." The artist's sketch of the DNA double helix made of plastic toys is pictured.

The exhibit opens with a reception on July 3 at noon with live music. Empire-Fulton Ferry State Park is accessible from Dock Street and Main Street in DUMBO. The free exhibit is on view July 3-30, from 10 am to 8:30 pm. For more information, visit the Web site at www.bwac.org or call (718) 596-2507.

—Lisa J. Curtis



BROOKLYN Bites

Neighborhood Dining Guide

This week: AROUND BAM

Chez Oskar

211 Dekalb Ave, at Adelphi Street, (718) 852-6250 (AmEx, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$14-\$19. * Chez Oskar is a French bistro that's been a bistro favorite with fans of the Caribbean — in Brooklyn. And what goes better with delicious French staples than a bottle of wine from an affordable list? Step inside, and you'll find the menu includes a shank with couscous or the steak frites, the flourless chocolate cake is a perfect ending. Brunch is served Saturday and Sunday from 11 am to 4 pm. Sidewalk cafe seats are now available. Closed Mondays.

I-Shebeen Madiba

195 Dekalb Ave, at Carlton Avenue, (718) 855-9190, www.i-shebeen.com (AmEx, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$12-\$22. *

Stepping into Madiba is like bursting into the basement Billowy interior canopies, wooden bar and pillow-topped benches transport you to a fantastic getaway. Madiba has a South African theme, with its own unique wine list. South African recipes include the Durban chicken, which is marinated with spicy pickled mango, "veggi bread" (a slow-cooked stew served in a three-legged, cast-iron pot) and ostrich chops with mustard sauce. Desserts include Kifkif bread, tart, chocolate indulgence and Jenny's malva pudding (with caramel and vanilla ice cream). Terrace seats available. Open daily.

Keur N' Deye

737 Fulton St, at South Portal Avenue, (718) 875-4937 (Cash only) Entrees: \$8-\$14.95. * Enjoy New Orleans cuisine with Asian and Middle Eastern influences. Chef-owner Ian Salix Cisse offers a menu that is traditional and full of flavor. The restaurant is filled with diners engrossed in a lemony gravy and topped with sauteed onions and filet mignon (the filet and rice). The menu also includes a variety of Senegalese experience. Meals are affordable and well worth the wait. Take a ride out to Fort Greene's Keur N' Deye for a memorable and enjoyable evening. Closed Mondays.

Liquors

219 Dekalb Ave, at Clemmons Avenue, (718) 246-0533 (AmEx, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$10-\$17. While Liquors does offer a cozy bar and lounge area, a reputation for wicked mojitos, and a selected wine list, it's name from the sign left by their previous tenant. "We thought it was beautiful and worthy of keeping," says owner Christian Denney. The bohemian space, with its exposed walls, creates a warm, comforting feeling. You can sit and have your meal inside, or in warmer months, in the garden, which Denney describes as "like a veranda, covered with a large umbrella." The menu is very simple. Chef Gerard Kiki, from Benin, lets the flavors of his homeland shine through. On his menu are hiji-crusted salmon with a soy-spice paste over rice, corn polenta and brown butter caper sauce and mango barbecue chicken served with sautéed beans and dirty rice and beans. Desserts include a pineapple-pomegranate crème brûlée. Open daily.

Lou Lou

222 Douglass Ave, at Clemmons Avenue, (718) 246-0533 (AmEx, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$12-\$20. * Lou Lou has a cozy atmosphere with rustic tables, wood-paneled walls and a warm, intimate feel. This French menu focuses on seafood: seared Maine diver sea scallops with portobello mushrooms, scallops braised with a warm basil pesto, mushrooms, and lemon marinated tomatoes. Also check for the rosemary marinated lamb chops, served with artichokes, arugula, and apple salad with crisp polenta. A three-course prix fixe menu is offered Monday through Friday from 5 pm to 10 pm, for \$17. Brunch is served Saturday and Sunday, from 11 am to 3 pm. Closed Tuesdays.

Mo-Bay Restaurant

112 Dekalb Ave, at Ashland Place, (718) 2800, www.mobayrestaurant.com (AmEx, DC, Disc, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$9.75-\$17.75. *

If Caribbean, soul and vegetarian food are what

★ = Full review available at



Abbreviation Key: AmEx= American Express; DC=Diner's Club; Disc=Discover Card; MC=MasterCard; Visa=Visa Card



Pot au feu (beef short ribs with marrowbone in consomme) at Thomas Beisi.

You fancy, then Mo-Bay restaurant is the place to be. Mo-Bay's beach hut interior, fresh-flowers and reggae music give the place a cool, vacation-like feel. The menu is filled with wine list. Chef-owner Mark Henehan's unique South African recipes include the Durban chicken, which is marinated with spicy pickled mango, "veggi bread" (a slow-cooked stew served in a three-legged, cast-iron pot) and ostrich chops with mustard sauce. Desserts include Kifkif bread, tart, chocolate indulgence and Jenny's malva pudding (with caramel and vanilla ice cream). Terrace seats available. Open daily.

Restaurant Gia

68 Lafayette Ave, at South Portal Avenue, (718) 875-248-1755, (AmEx, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$17-\$22. *

Enjoy New American cuisine with Asian and Middle Eastern influences. Chef-owner Ian Salix Cisse offers a menu that is traditional and full of flavor. The menu includes a variety of entrees in a lemony gravy and topped with sautéed onions and filet mignon (the filet and rice). The menu also includes a variety of Senegalese experience. Meals are affordable and well worth the wait. Take a ride out to Fort Greene's Keur N' Deye for a memorable and enjoyable evening. Closed Mondays.

Scopello

63 Lafayette Ave, at Fulton Street, (718) 852-1100, www.scopello.net (AmEx, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$11-\$19. *

"Our dishes are influenced by the Greeks, the Sicilian-born owner Fabrizio Di Mitrì of the electric menu offered at Scopello," says

The menu prepared by chef Michelangelo Scopello is dominated by the use of fresh fish and vegetables. Try the octopus stuffed with breadcrumbs, raisins and pine nuts; the grilled octopus salad served with carrots, or the scallops with a mix of basil pesto and cilantro sauce, sliced thinly and served in a martini glass. Talcious fish are outside along the sidewalk, while the interior is filled with a warm and cozy atmosphere. Try the seafood appetizers, such as the squid rings with a warm basil pesto, mushrooms, and lemon marinated tomatoes.

The main dining room features a large, wall-to-wall mural of a Greek temple, and dining scenes set with bugle-shaped sconces. The ceiling is an acid trip of orange and green squares. Gold brocade chairs accompany expansive round tables. In the front of the cavernous room is a stage for musical performances and a dance floor.

Had that space been filled with the same clientele, fox-trotting about the beginning July 10 and continuing through the month The Fran Carol Dance Band will perform.

The Oak Room's menu is much as you'd expect from a restaurant that is trying hard to make classic, continental dining fashionable. Chef Michel Aytekin, whose resume boasts stints at

the Hotel Carlton in Cannes, Le Pavillon in Miami and Chez Claude in Beverly Hills, offers a menu that can be neatly divided into surf and turf with fusion touches.

Each course is super-sized, the ingredients fresh and the plating creative.

With meat, Aytekin offers endive, carrots and onions that are slow-cooked in butter. All the vegetables are good, but the long simmer in the butter yields a deliciously peppery, velvety endive.

Grilled whole sea bass soulfully

and succulent, like you'd eat in a tiny, seaside Greek restaurant... and had as much spank as cod. The menu claims that the fish was drizzled with lemon olive oil dressing. If it was, I didn't taste it.

Our waiter arrived just as Crowe launched into "I'm a Little Teapot,"

which seemed appropriate. Both the blueberry crème brûlée and a fluffy tiramisu were sweet enough to send a diabetic into shock.

The Grand Prospect Hall works as an intimate, candlelit dining room.

The problem with the Oak Room is that it,

too, seems like an over-the-top wed-

ding hall. The Halkias family are

aiming for an Old World, posh,

dinner-and-dancing club with refined service.

Hopefully the audience for that kind of

room and menu will find the Oak

Room soon, so the bands will be ser-

vading more than six diners.

Wine, dine and dance

Small audiences so far for Oak Room's vintage scene

By Tina Barry
for The Brooklyn Papers

For the past 20 years, Michael and Alice Halkias have been restoring the 114-year-old Grand Prospect Hall in Park Slope. The hall, built in 1892, served as an ornate Victorian public center with theaters, bars, ballrooms and even bowling alleys. Caruso sang there and Fred and Adele Astaire danced on the ballroom's polished floors.

But by 1981, when the Halkias purchased the building, its interior was lined with enormous rain buckets. Mr. Halkias, who directed the renovation, wanted to keep the authentic duplication. He favors pastel pink, baby blue and pale green. And he loves gold. Lots of gold.

Halkias is an art lover, too, who appreciates the work of the great masters. In their honor he collected copies of Rembrandt, Vermeer, Van Gogh and Monet hanging about the hall. The first floor is a dizzying fantasyland of portraits, frolicking cherubs and sparkling chandeliers that make an appropriate backdrop for the greatest fantasy of all — the happily-ever-after pact made by the birds and groves who marry there.

In January, the Halkias' re-opened the Oak Room, a fancy-shmancy supper club on the premises. The room orches (there's a large, oak-lined bar) is filled with tables tucked on their way to the dining room) offer dinner each evening and serve as a dancing and dining venue on Saturday nights.

The main dining room features a large, wall-to-wall mural of a Greek temple, and dining scenes set with bugle-shaped sconces. The ceiling is an acid trip of orange and green squares. Gold brocade chairs accompany expansive round tables. In the front of the cavernous room is a stage for musical performances and a dance floor.

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© The Brooklyn Papers / Craig Morris

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With meat, Aytekin offers endive, carrots and onions that are slow-cooked in butter. All the vegetables are good, but the long simmer in the butter yields a deliciously peppery, velvety endive.

About that shrimp martini: The six shrimp cocktail served in martini glasses are colossal, and so flavorful that the "classic cocktail" served with it is unnecessary — a good thing as the sauce needs more horseradish to achieve the requisite stinging nostrils effect.

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(Left) Chef Michel Aytekin in the newly re-opened Oak Room Restaurant and Supper Club in Grand Prospect Hall. (Above) Aytekin's rack of lamb with roasted spring baby vegetables, lyonnaise potatoes and caramel mint sauce.

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Well-dressed fish

Step inside the newly decorated Baracuda seafood restaurant in Bay Ridge and you might forget you're on land.

Last November, owners Rod Alexander, Nadia Garcia and Elena Tschudinova gave Baracuda a facelift. Although the back rooms are still a work-in-progress, the overall result is magical.

From the glittery wall displays of swimming fish to the tiny, blue, fish-shaped bowls filled with Goldfish crackers, the restaurant is decked out in one of the many cocktails at the bar you cannot help but be impressed by the sights, sounds and smells around you.

For starters, Alexander calls the cuisine and ambiance at Baracuda "magical." One step inside, and you know why.

Baracuda also offers a daily prix fixe menu, from 4 pm to 7 pm, for \$19.95 as well as daily and happy hour specials.

Before you leave, don't forget about your sweet tooth, and try the strawberry crepe cake or lemon meringue pie. If you're feeling frisky, ask about the crepe Suzette, a blend of peaches, grapes, papaya and strawberries wrapped and served with vanilla ice cream.

Alexander calls the cuisine and ambiance at Baracuda "magical." One step inside, and you know why.

On Wednesday evenings, the restaurant is open for dinner as well as for brunch on Saturdays and Sundays. For more information, call (718) 833-5783.

— Chiara V. Cowan



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JOIN OUR GROUP of local professionals who meet in downtown Brooklyn to trade business lead. Our goal: becoming familiar with every member's expertise, experience, and preferred client categories, so we can confidently refer new prospects.

On the 2nd Wednesday morning of each month, we share recent leads we've given and gotten — and previous referrals are now clients. Then, a member presents a brief business description, and a few tips for reaching new prospects or closing sales. Between meetings, individual members discuss their specialties over breakfast, lunch or coffee.

WHO ARE WE? Small business owners, consultants, sales representatives, managers, providers of creative services, entrepreneurs of every persuasion — a true cross-section of Brooklyn's burgeoning business community. We're a non-competitive group only one member in a particular field may join.

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Where to GO

Compiled by Susan Rosenthal

SAT, JULY 3

OUTDOORS AND TOURS

BIRD WATCHING CRUISE: Guided bird-watching tour of 60-acre Prospect Park Lake aboard electric boat. \$15. Sat., 10 a.m. & 1 p.m. Noon to 12:45 p.m. Last cruise at Wolman Rink. (718) 287-3400.

SHOW HOUSE: Bridge Street Development hosts its fourth annual show house in Brooklyn's Cobble Hill neighborhood. Open from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. 380 Lewis Ave. (718) 573-6893.

NIGHTWALK TOUR: Mauricio Lerner leads a tour of Ft. Greene, Clinton Hill and Brooklyn Heights. \$35. Sat., 8 p.m. Meet at Marriott Hotel Brooklyn, 333 Adams St. (718) 789-0430.

GARDEN WALK: Brooklyn Botanic Garden explores how cultures from around the world rely on plants. \$5, 3 p.m. Sat., 10 a.m. & 1 p.m. 100 Eastern Parkway. (718) 723-2200.

TWILIGHT TOUR: Big Onion Tours offers a tour of the East River, Brooklyn Bridge and through Brooklyn Heights. \$12. \$10 students and seniors. Meet at the northeast corner of Broadway and Chambers Street, lower Manhattan. (212) 439-1090.

PERFORMANCE

CELEBRATE BROOKLYN: Budweiser Latin Music Series features Bacilos and the Bronx Kings. Sat., 8 p.m. Prospect Park Bandshell, enter park at Ninth Street and Prospect Park. \$10. Sat., 8 p.m. July 3.

CONCERT: Kingsbridge Community College hosts a concert featuring Jai Rodriguez, the lead singer of End of Oriental Boulevard. (718) 386-5051. Free.

BROADWAY: Broadway Suite plays music of tribal dances of Northern Africa. No cover. 9 p.m. 37th Ninth St. (718) 250-2222.

BROOKLYN LYCEUM: presents "Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind." Sat., 8 p.m. Sat., 1 p.m. Sun., 5 p.m. online (www.gowanus.org) or \$19 plus the roll of a single six-sided die. Sat., 8 p.m. Sun., 5 p.m. 11 pm. 200 Eastern Parkway. (718) 638-5000. Free.

FIRST SATURDAY: Brooklyn Museum presents Brooklyn's first annual Celebration of an art, film and music program. Includes Brazilian steel guitar band The Moongliders; dance music from 1920s and 1930s; silent films from 2002 and 2003. Adults \$15, pm. 200 Eastern Parkway. (718) 638-6724.

GOOG EATING CONTEST: World's greatest eaters to compete at National Goog Eating Contest, including Eli Kobayashi, 11:30 a.m. Nathan's Famous, 1 p.m. 149th Street, 2nd Avenue. (212) 627-5766. Rain or shine. \$10. Free.

BIRD WALK: An Audubon naturalist searches Prospect Park for fledgling birds. 8 a.m. to 10 am. Audubon Center Prospect Park. (718) 240-3400. Free.

SHOW HOUSE: Bridge Street Development hosts its fourth annual show house. Noon to 8 p.m. See Sat., July 3.

PLAY BALL: Brooklyn Cyclones play their home games at KeySpan Park. 1994 Surf Ave. Call for ticket info. (718) 449-8497.

OTHER

NIGHTWALK TOUR: Mauricio Lerner leads a tour of Ft. Greene, Clinton Hill and Brooklyn Heights. \$35. Sat., 8 p.m. Meet at Marriott Hotel Brooklyn, 333 Adams St. (718) 789-0430.

EXHIBIT OPENING: Brooklyn Women's Art Center presents "Chasing Rainbows," an outdoor sculpture exhibit. Live music with the Empire Fulton Ferry State Park, Water Street, Dock Street, between Fourth and East River. (718) 596-2507. Free.

BAMCINEMATEK: presents "Four on Film: Too Good to Be True" (\$18). \$10 2 p.m., 4:30 p.m., 6:45 p.m. and 9 p.m. 30 Lafayette Ave. (718) 789-5444.

HALITAN DRUM MUSIC: La Troupe Makandal offers a program of three drumming styles. \$10. Sat., 8 p.m. Welcome: 3:30 pm to 5 p.m. Father Dempsey Center, 61 Park Place. Call for ticket info. (718) 449-8540.

DOUBLE FEATURE: Night feature presents "Noon on the Moon" and "The Dark Crystal." Sat., 8 p.m. 200 Eastern Parkway. (718) 363-2822. Film fest 6 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. 70 North Sixth St. Call for ticket info. (718) 782-5188.

CHILDREN

INDEPENDENCE DAY: Sunset Park Community Church offers a service "A Day of Independence" to celebrate the day. Create banners and paper hats. 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. 15th Street and Ocean avenues. (718) 789-2507. Free.

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GAM-PACOS: Repetory offers a film fest 6 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. 70 North Sixth St. Call for ticket info. (718) 782-5188.

MON, JULY 5

Independence Day

OUTDOORS AND TOURS

FIRESIDE: The Macys' 4th of July fireworks will park two barges in the East River. Sat., 9 p.m. Pier 15, Montague and Franklin Streets. Spectators invited to watch the fireworks from any point in the park with an unobstructed view of the sky above the East River. Adults \$10, children \$5. 4th of July, 9 p.m. 11th Remsen St. (718) 596-1700. Free.

AUDITIONS: Brooklyn Youth Chorus Academy is scheduling auditions for young singers. Girls in grades 2 through 5. Call 782-5188. Girls in grades 6 through 8 are invited to try out. 179 Pacific St. Call. (718) 243-9447.

THURS, JULY 8

OUTDOORS AND TOURS

FIRESIDE: The Macys' 4th of July fireworks will park two barges in the East River. Sat., 9 p.m. Pier 15, Montague and Franklin Streets. Spectators invited to watch the fireworks from any point in the park with an unobstructed view of the sky above the East River. Adults \$10, children \$5. 4th of July, 9 p.m. 11th Remsen St. (718) 596-1700. Free.

REPERTORY: Young Filmmakers hosts a class for young adults ages 15 and older. Learn about film making, editing, shooting, and more. Four sessions. \$100. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. 30 Lafayette Ave. (718) 782-5188.

PARK CONCERT: City Parks Foundation presents "A Day of Independence" concert series in Prospect Park. Today, Jerry Gonzalez and the Fort Apache Band. 7 p.m. DeKalb Avenue. (718) 240-3400. Free.

RHYTHM AND BLUES: Annual concert series at McCarren Park. Today, Chuck D and the Roots. 7 p.m. DeKalb Avenue. (718) 240-3400. Free.

CIRCUS: Brooklyn Circus presents "Thrills From Brazil." \$15. \$10 children. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. 15th Street and Franklin Avenue. (718) 240-3400. Free.

DANCE LESSON: Young Filmmakers in Repertory offers a dance class for kids. 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Sunset Park. Call for info. (718) 243-9447. Free.

UPRISING BAKERY: Reading features Suki Kim, author of "The Uprising of the Guard." 7 p.m. 180 Remsen St. Call for info. (718) 243-9447. Free.

SHOW HOUSE: Bridge Street Development hosts its fourth annual show house. Noon to 8 p.m. See Sat., July 3.

BUCKLEY CHILDREN'S MUSEUM: Kids are invited to a pretend trip to South Africa. Tour through Cape Town during a stay hour. Ages 5 and older. \$4, free for members. 3:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. 145 Brooklyn Ave. (718) 254-4000. Free.

BEST OF THE BEST: Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts presents "Best of the Best." 7 p.m. 11th Remsen St. (718) 596-1700. Free.

GOOG EATING CONTEST: World's greatest eaters to compete at National Goog Eating Contest, including Eli Kobayashi, 11:30 a.m. Nathan's Famous, 1 p.m. 149th Street, 2nd Avenue. (212) 627-5766. Rain or shine. \$10. Free.

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Critics rip Downtown traffic calming study

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

A major study to curb traffic in Downtown Brooklyn took nearly a decade, \$81.2 million to complete, but the city Department of Transportation report may have missed the mark, a transportation watchdog group charges.

"If this is the city's idea of traffic mitigation than we're in trouble," said Kit Hodge, campaign coordinator for Transportation Alternatives.

Hodge criticized the study for only looking at ways to reduce the effects of traffic rather than aiming to reduce the traffic itself.

Residents, many of whom contributed hours of their time to the study, believe the process has been eagerly awaiting the results of the study, which commenced in 1996. But Hodge said the report will likely do little to better life for pedestrians.

Instead of implementing what she calls "real traffic mitigation strategies," including traffic circles and speed

humps, the DOT changes include adding oversized signs and left-turn bays.

"This is a missed opportunity to put conditions in place that would help residents cope with the growth and sprawl this development," said Carolyn Kohheim, a traffic consultant who heads Community Consulting Services.

The study also does not take into account major developments proposed for the area, including the Downtown Brooklyn Plan — which is intended to bring at least 4.5 million square feet of office space, 1 million square feet of retail space and 1,000 units of housing.

— Broadway & Atlantic Yards basketball arena and office tower plan or Brooklyn Bridge Park, being built in phases along the Brooklyn Heights peninsula, which would include a hotel.

Those plans together are expected to bring at least 12 million square feet of residential, commercial and retail development — or the equivalent of six Empire State buildings.

Asked about the criticisms, DOT spokesman Tom Cocola

said the project was still "a work in progress."

"They're all helpful gestures, but they don't constitute a comprehensive change that can be applied to the city," says Hodge.

Carolyn Kohheim, a traffic consultant who heads Community Consulting Services.



Congrats to grads

Saul Hernandez, left, and Isiah Cobb celebrate after graduation from the Helen Keller Services for the Blind Children's Learning Center on June 23 at 7 Metrotech Center, Downtown.

said the project was still "a work in progress."

"Though the report is final and we are moving ahead with implementation, we do continue to be receptive to any further suggestions or comments," Cocola said.

Despite harsh criticism of the plan, Hodge said she was pleased to see the inclusion of additional bike lanes.

Seven new lanes were to be added by the end of June at:

— Jay Street (southbound from Sands to Tillary Streets)

— Navy Street (westbound from Navy to Jay streets)

— Navy Street/Ashland Place (from Sands Street to DeKalb Avenue)

— Myrtle Avenue (eastbound from Flatbush to Washington avenues)

— Fulton Street/Kalb Avenue (westbound from Cumberland Street to Flatbush Avenue)

— Third Avenue (southbound from Thirteenth to 15th streets)

— Borden Place (southbound from Atlantic Avenue to Bergen Street)

In addition, a full \$8.2 mil-

lion reconstruction of Tillary Street that was closed for 2009 has been moved up to 2007.

Councilman David Yassky, whose district includes Downtown Brooklyn and some of its surrounding neighborhoods said he was pleased with much of the plan.

"The plan seems to be a comprehensive proposal for traffic calming in the downtown area," said Yassky, adding, "They will have to continue to study the area in preparation for all of this new development."

Jane McGroarty, transportation director for the Brooklyn Heights Association, said there isn't enough space in Downtown Brooklyn to accommodate everybody who wants to "drive here, park here and drive through here."

"I'm happy the traffic calming study happened and I think there were some good plans that came out of it," McGroarty said, "but I'm also not naive enough to think it will solve the traffic problems in Downtown Brooklyn."

Court-appointed panel is critical of judge elections

By Joel Stashenko
Associated Press

ALBANY — At the least, give the state's judiciary credit for introspection and some uncompromising self-analysis this week.

A commission appointed by Chief Judge Judith Kaye found that New York State has serious doubts about the credibility of the electoral process by which judges are chosen on the bench in New York state. And while calling the vast majority of elected judges conscientious and qualified, the panel said wrongdoing by members of the judiciary has created a crisis where the commission is needed to propose corrections.

"Every part of New York State is experiencing some form of threat to public confidence in judicial elections," said John Ferrick, the former Fordham Law School dean who chaired the commission for Kaye. "Although the challenges may manifest in different ways depending on local culture, one message is clear: the threat to public confidence in judicial elections is pervasive."

This is bad on a number of levels, the commission concluded. Most fundamentally, if the public doesn't believe in the fairness of how judges are chosen, they lose confidence in the judicial system itself. People who don't trust judges and don't trust candidates for judicial office have undermined the integrity of the courts in the eyes of some New Yorkers.

The commission quoted a former state senator as saying when people stop believing they will get fairness and justice, "people won't go to court, but to the streets or to a gun dealer."

The commission blamed this crisis of confidence on several factors:

There are ongoing criminal investigations in New York City about how judicial elections are conducted, and scandals about how elected judges handle their political power.

The most glaring of those cases are in Brooklyn, where Supreme Court Justice Gerald Garson faces criminal charges for accepting bribes to "fix" cases. Garson suggested that corruption existed when he told investigators that judgeships

could be bought from Brooklyn Democratic leaders, allegations also under scrutiny by prosecutors.

Elsewhere, the Kaye commission noted, heavy spending on judicial elections and sometimes inappropriate "well-financed" statewide candidates for judicial office have undermined the integrity of the courts in the eyes of some New Yorkers.

The commission's public criticism is confounded by a populace largely uninformed about its elected judiciary and disconnected from courts and judges," the commission concluded.

Seventy-three percent of the state's 1,143 full-time judges are elected, as are most of the 2,164 town and village court judges. Chances are, if New Yorkers have dealings with the courts, it will be before a judge who is elected to the bench rather than appointed.

The Kaye commission said that is not necessarily bad, although reformers have generally called for more appointed judges and fewer elected ones. Appointed judges in New York are largely at the uppermost levels of the appeals court system or on the Court of Appeals, which hears suits against the state. In New York City, the mayor appoints judges to the Family and Criminal courts.

As the commission noted, most recently to the state constitution in 1848 made permanent judgeships elected positions, and the state has stuck with that model since.

The commission endorsed the idea of making most judgeships elected to face the voters, but with several changes designed to make the process of electing judges less political.

The panel recommended that the Legislature consider a system for electing judges, non-competitive primaries held one year before their terms run out. If they pass muster, the judges would be considered elected for their new term.

For those offices would be considered vacant and the former judges would be free to run the following year in a partisan election. The commission said this system would eliminate the partisan politics of judicial elections, have them engage in the years they seek re-election, with the con-

tributing risk of appealing beholden to political leaders and donors.

The Kaye commission also proposed moving toward a system of public financing for judicial elections and of allowing only candidates who are certified by regional screening panels to get on ballots for judicial office.

The Legislature has to approve some of the proposed changes; others can be done administratively within the court system. Kaye said she endorses the ideas.

The panel said something good could still come from the elected judiciary's current integrity issues.



Summer's in the air

From left, Beatriz Garcia, Krista Ruhe, Lee Carter and Claire Ratliff pose for a photo at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden during the Garden's "Passport to Summer" party on June 24.



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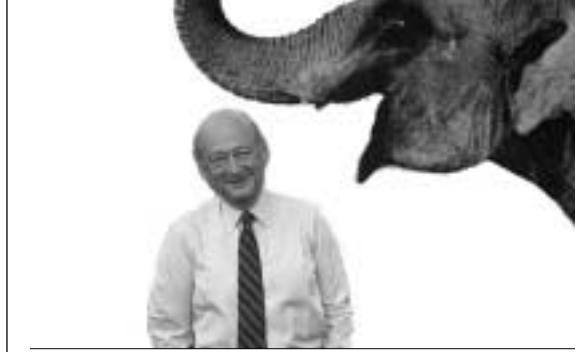
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